

**PRINCIPALS' ADVISORY COUNCIL (PrAC) MEETING
MINUTES
MARCH 16, 2004
9:00 A.M. – 2 P.M.
STATE BOARD ROOM**

Attending:

Sandy Allen, Phillip Barker, Terry Brooks, J. Leon Davidson, Ezra Farris, Linda France, Susan French, Jennifer Hobbs, Beth Johnson, Sharon Baker Knight, Phyllis O'Neal, Mark Owens, Mark Raleigh, Dr. Tony Ross, Steve Schenck, Mark Sellers, Rose Skepple, Jon Stratton, Debbie Tronzo, Marty Vowels, William Whitaker, and Commissioner Gene Wilhoit

CATS Testing (Scott Trimble, Associate Commissioner and Cindy Owen, Principal Assistant for the Office of Assessment and Accountability)

- Cindy Owen and Scott Trimble shared two assessment & accountability updates with the PrAC and walked the Council through reflecting on CATS to address whether or not Kentucky's current design is making a maximum contribution to the kind of instruction needed for students to reach proficiency. Members were provided a copy of the Power Point presentation.
- PrAC members had the following comments:
 - *Present updates to teachers and administrators in an attempt to address concerns raised by them and showing a desire to improve the system.*
 - *Concern was expressed with the addition of the math and reading components to the elementary tests and the number of items. Should the number of items be reduced? This will become a time and LEP issue. Consider changing the order of the test every year.*
 - *There is a direct relationship between the slow turnaround of reports and the use of data in the planning process (lack of trust with the data). Could it be that the Comprehensive School Improvement Plans have become categorical funding compliance documents? **The Commissioner would like to have an extended conversation around the goal of making this document a truly strategic document that lives with the school.***
 - *In order for principals to make good decisions about students, a set of assessments should be created as entry level for students with frequent assessments and intervention strategies put into place to provide an individual picture of each student as they move through the educational process. Longitudinal co-hart assessments are important. Principals are using other assessments to support that individual diagnostic piece (i.e., PASS, EdVision, teacher administered DRA's, scrimmage tests, STAR systems, etc.). The tests provide instant feedback to the students, and the results become a pride issue with the students.*
 - *Teachers involved in scoring can change instruction; however, the quality of training becomes an issue in order to keep consistency with scoring. The KDE needs to consider data that indicates:*
 - *How many days did the teachers miss during the school year?*
 - *How many new teachers does the school have, and how many teachers are teaching for the first time?*
 - *What are the demographics of the neighborhoods where students live?*
 - *What is the academic index of the parents?*
 - *It was suggested that the on-demand writing should count as much, if not more, than the writing portfolio so that the emphasis can be on teaching writing skills rather than developing writing pieces. What is the relevance in today's society of the type of writing that is in the portfolio piece? The expectation of business and community is more of an on-demand response - concise, consistent, and to the point. The writing portfolio should be a body of work over time. Be careful so that the teaching tool does not become an assessment point of admission. Is there any way to assure congruence of CATS and other tests (AP tests), and is there any room for alternative systems especially if the school has reached proficiency? Teachers must understand how to teach writing. It also takes a lot of additional resources just to get the portfolio complete. You are not getting authentic relevant results, it is a result of bringing in extra resources, changing the schedule, etc. An elementary principal expressed concern with giving the on-demand test and adding more weight. It would be developmentally inappropriate at the elementary age as far as the developmental process of how kids learn to write. However, an accumulative portfolio that demonstrates growth where you can see the development of a writer would be valid. The content pieces are relevant. Pieces need to be scored at the levels that the writing pieces are done. It would be interesting to examine portfolios and their use in other venues other than education – artists, etc. What is their definition of a*

good portfolio and the rubric? Maybe we should consider different requirements at each level? At the high school, there are concerns about arts and humanities requirements. Consider having the arts and humanities be the portfolio piece. The Commissioner commented that maybe it would be good to have the portfolio serve as a ticket to the next level of learning for that child. The IGP is a process a child and parents develop over four years. Could that portfolio be used for admission and placement decisions at the college or technical school level? Why is the three-hour retraining on scoring portfolios required every year? Look at what type of information is being presented. It may need to be longer. **The Commissioner will look at the portfolio training for teachers.** 4th grade portfolios are negatively impacting math scores. Teachers are spending too much time on portfolios while other subjects are being neglected. Teachers need to be accountable for teaching kids what they need to learn. The 5th year in primary can work to our advantage. We hate to send students on to middle school without appropriate reading and math skills. To strengthen the 5th year, an exit criterion could be implemented at each grade level. Not exit exams, but exit criteria, grade to grade to identify potential dropouts at the elementary level. All feeder schools should share in the credit for dropouts at a middle school or high school. Need stronger preschool, daycare and kindergarten programs. Some students need more time. High schools need assistance with developing a testing schedule to help equalize testing. Could the timing of the high school state assessments be changed and the senior year be redefined? Could schools determine when they believe students are at a level of proficiency and re-sequence the testing – earlier opportunities to test rigor? Could we allow for professional judgment and/or in-school authentic demonstration of competency (i.e., the Arts)?

- Dropouts should be a district problem – accountability is K-12. High schools have no leverage or control over middle and elementary programs. Computer-based learning provides instant feedback to students and teachers, and schools should have interventions in place to address the students' needs and possible dropout issue. Universities should teach more than content. The teacher preparation programs should focus on interventions and how to recognize the students' needs. All schools should share the responsibility of the dropout rate.
- We have to figure out the negative effects of our system that are driving education in an inappropriate way. Look at the materials provided and be thinking about this because we will keep this conversation going.

Instructional Management System (Starr Lewis, Associate Commissioner for the Office of Academic and Professional Development)

- The Commissioner noted that the KDE is attempting to redefine some of its work based on the fact that teachers in the field have requested assistance in designing instruction and the delivery of educational programming for students. Starr Lewis and Michael Miller, Director, Division of Curriculum Development, shared a work plan that lays out an interactive instructional management system that teachers could access via KDE's Website for resources which include video clips (*some are existing resources that are currently being used across Kentucky*) to use based on the their needs in the classroom to help them with their work. They presented the group with KDE's best thinking about what Standards-Based Student Centered Classrooms should look like. The Department has been collaborating with higher education regarding every college graduate having a base of operation of this work plan when they leave college. The KTIP should align with this document. The document will be e-mailed to the CEEC. Mr. Miller also noted that the KDE in collaboration with the Collaborative for Teaching and Learning is currently piloting the Kentucky Guide for Reflective Classroom Practice. Twenty-five classrooms or schools are participating in this project. The KDE is also engaged in conversations with other organizations (KET, Kentucky.gov) to help with building this system. It was recommended that the KDE contact the Kentucky Leadership Academy and contact associations such as the Kentucky Association of Secondary School Principals and present at their conferences. This tool helps teachers think about their own practice, and this resource will never be complete.
- The following issues are being addressed by the work plan:
 - Provide greater assistance to teaching - more specific curricular information (best practices) for classroom teachers. These best practices would not be mandated but available as a resource. Specific information will be provided per population in the context of instruction and school culture. The Program of Studies, the Academic Expectations, and the Core Content for Assessment documents will be merged into one Internet friendly place. More specific details and models of curriculum mapping will be provided by June. The KDE will be going out to Kentucky classrooms to search and find existing exemplary units of studies and curriculum maps that are currently being used.
 - Include support mechanisms in the system that assure that students are obtaining prerequisite skills and at the same time, allowing those decisions to be made at the local level.

- *Address ways to improve the state assessment and accountability system. Snapshot assessments will be included in the curriculum mapping. Develop a statewide network of CATS-like assessments. Districts/schools were encouraged to join the network and/or work on the technology system to support this interaction. The KDE is looking at in-state scoring on the CATS assessment and end-of-course exams in key content areas at the high school level. Students' responses will be included noting if the response is apprentice, novice, or distinguished. PrAC members indicated that it would be helpful if students could take an assessment on line. The system is designed with opportunities in the units of study to assess students.*
- Each part of the interactive instructional management system will have a communications and support plan. Much of the work plan and its components will be on line by June. Hopefully, this resource can be demonstrated at the June 10 PrAC meeting.
- PrAC members encouraged the KDE to focus on mathematics first and provide teachers an opportunity to collaborate on line with other teachers (*chat room*). It is important to include follow-up along with each lesson and/or a comment section for teachers to record their experiences.

Reading First (Starr Lewis)

- Starr Lewis and Felicia Cumings Smith, Elementary Reading Consultant and Reading First Coordinator, pointed out the differences between Reading First and Read to Achieve and addressed the identification of what assessments should be used and when, what should be assessed, and what the next steps for instruction are after the assessments.
 - Reading First is a program that provides funds at the school level to put in place a comprehensive program, supplemental programs, and intervention programs. There is a requirement at the school level for different kinds of assessments. The schools that receive Reading First funds will have to screen every primary student to determine their reading skills and to determine what follow-up diagnostic assessment is needed for students that are not where they need to be in reading. These schools will do an assessment for all students to ensure continuous progress. Reading First provides professional development for all Kentucky primary teachers. Reading First requires all schools that receive funding to include a family literacy component. Standards for early childhood that have been released and disseminated to preschool staff around the state. The KDE will be providing statewide professional development around family literacy. Read to Achieve targets the intervention piece. Schools will have to demonstrate that they have a comprehensive program in place and chose an intervention to help struggling students. The Department is sharing the reading information at conferences.
 - Schools must have consistent practices and consistent methodology for teaching reading in place from classroom to classroom. Appropriate assessments must be identified for middle school and high schools. Check out the literacy Web page at: http://www.education.ky.gov/cgi-bin/MsmGo.exe?grab_id=24242240&EXTRA_ARG=&host_id=1&page_id=1163&query=Literacy&hiword=LITERACY+. Schools must use the assessment to impact instruction and determine what types of professional development is needed to ensure a direct impact on instruction in a timely manner. Make sure the most qualified teachers (with expertise in teaching reading) are teaching reading especially to the students who are struggling. The Commissioner would like to see every school, K-12, have a literacy plan. Resources are available with creating a literacy plan. Ms. Renee Matthews, High School Reading Consultant, has been working with districts on their plans, and a reading and writing component should be included in the Comprehensive School Improvement Plan. Schools should use the literacy perks document available on the literacy Website to determine where they need assistance. Nine elements have been identified that align to the SI/SI document and the past Governor's reading initiatives. Refer to the KET resource, Reading Strategies in Action. This resource will help teachers at the middle and high school levels understand their roles in teaching reading to help students access the content. The KDE is currently trying to identify reading programs for both middle and high schools in Kentucky that have been effective. Read to Achieve will soon be at the elementary level and other schools can tap into this grant opportunity.

Gates Grant & SAELP II (Linda France, Deputy Commissioner for Learning and Results Services, and Steve Schenck, Associate Commissioner for the Office of Leadership and School Improvement)

- The purpose of the Gates Grant was to put technology in the hands of leaders to help them become better instructional leaders across Kentucky. Kentucky received \$828,000 and on-line professional development training modules were developed for principals. Carryover money from Year I was rolled over to Year II funding. Consultants were hired to work out of the cooperatives to recruit principals and to provide assistance to principals. Owen County and Paris Independent reported that the on-line modules were beneficial to them. Additional modules are still under

development. The KDE is looking at PC Tablets that would allow principals and administrators to collect data regarding teachers and students. Principals were encouraged to apply for the Year II Gates Grant. Linda France indicated that principals will be given information regarding Year II Gates Grant funds DIRECTLY in a timely manner with specific information. Marty Vowels indicated that she would like training and resources without grant funds. Principals suggested that the KDE work with the Kentucky Leadership Academy on training and follow-up mentoring. Contact Steve Schenck regarding templates to use right now.

- The SAELP II Leadership Initiative first round funding was used to gather data on how to make the job of the principal more doable. We have learned that there is not a shortage of candidates. Candidates are being trained. There were three breakthrough ideas that are in the SAELP II Proposal:
 - Establish a statewide leadership development system from pre-service preparation to ongoing PD to include a process of shared accountability by the state, districts, universities, and other leadership development providers.
 - Move distributed leadership to the second generation by building teacher and parent ownership for student achievement and making the principal's job more doable and more intentionally focused on student achievement.
 - Kentucky will create a Public Policy Forum to provide SAELP II oversight and serve as a change agent for leadership reform to increase student achievement.
- A summit on teacher leadership is planned for May 11. The summit will bring together national experts and stakeholders to talk about leadership.

NEXT MEETING: JUNE 10, 2004